

Zaza language

Zaza, also called **Zazaki**, **Kirmanjki**, **Kirdki** and **Dimli**,^[6] is an Indo-European language spoken primarily in Eastern Turkey by the Zazas. The language is a part of the northwestern group of the Iranian branch of the Indo-European family and belongs to the Zaza–Gorani (with Gorani). The glossonym Zaza originated as a pejorative^[7] and many Zazas call their language Dimlî.^[8]

While Zazaki is linguistically closer related to *Gorani*, *Gilaki*, *Talysh*, *Tati*, *Mazandarani* and the *Semnani* language,^[9] Kurdish has had a profound impact on the language due to centuries of interaction, which have blurred the boundaries between the two languages.^[10] This and the fact that a majority of Zaza-speakers identify themselves as ethnic *Kurds*,^{[11][12]} have encouraged linguists to classify the language as a Kurdish dialect.^{[13][14][15][16]}

According to Ethnologue (which cites [Paul 1998]),^[17] the number of speakers is between 1.5 and 2.5 million (including all dialects). According to Nevins, the number of Zaza speakers is between 2 and 4 million.^[18]

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Disputed origin

While the origin of the Zaza is disputed, one theory claims that the word *Dimlî* derives from the ancient name *Daylam* and that Zazas are remnants of the *Daylamites* who migrated westwards from the 10th century on.^[19]

Dialects

There are three main Zaza dialects:

- Northern Zaza**.^[20] It is spoken in *Tunceli*, *Erzincan*, *Erzurum*, *Sivas*, *Gumushane*, Mus, Kayseri provinces.

Its subdialects are:

- West-Dersim^[21]
- East-Dersim, *Varto*, *Sarız*, *Koçgiri*

- Southern Zaza**.^[22] It is spoken in primarily *Bingöl*, *Çermik*, *Dicle*, *Eğil*, *Gerger*, *Palu* and *Hani*, Turkey.

Its subdialects are:

- Sivereki, Kori, Hazzu, Motki, Dumbuli, Eastern/Central Zazaki, Dersimki.

Zaza shows many similarities with *Kurmanji*, which it does not share with Caspian languages:

- Similar personal pronouns and use of these^[23]
- Enclitic use of the letter "u"^[23]
- Very similar ergative structure^[24]
- Masculine and feminine *ezafe* system^[25]
- Both languages have nominative and oblique cases that differs by masculine -î and feminine -ê
- Both languages have forgotten possessive enclitics, while it exists in other languages as Persian, Sorani, Gorani, Hewrami or Shabaki
- Both languages distinguish between aspirated and unaspirated *voiceless stops*
- Similar vowel phonemes

Zaza	
Native to	Eastern Turkey
Region	Provinces of Sivas, Tunceli, Bingöl, Erzurum, Erzincan, Elazığ, Muş, Malatya, ^[1] Adiyaman and Diyarbakır ^[2]
Ethnicity	Zaza
Native speakers	1.6 million (1998) ^[3]
<div>Language family</div>	<div>Indo-European<ul style="list-style-type: none">Indo-Iranian<ul style="list-style-type: none">Iranian<ul style="list-style-type: none">Western<ul style="list-style-type: none">Northwestern<ul style="list-style-type: none">Caspian^[4]<ul style="list-style-type: none">Zaza–Gorani<ul style="list-style-type: none">Zaza</div>
<div>Writing system</div>	Latin script
Language codes	
ISO 639-2	zza (https://www.loc.gov/stan dards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?code_ID=510)
ISO 639-3	<div>zza – inclusive code <div>Individual codes:</div> <div>kiu – Kirmanjki (Northern Zaza)</div> <div>diq – Dimli (Southern Zaza)</div> </div>
Glottolog	zaza1246 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/zaza1246) ^[5]
Linguasphere	58-AAA-ba
<div><div><div><div></div><div><div>Geographic distribution of the Kurdish languages and Zaza–Gorani languages</div></div></div></div><div><div><div><input type="checkbox"/> Kurmanji</div><div><input type="checkbox"/> Sorani</div><div><input type="checkbox"/> Southern</div></div><div><div><input type="checkbox"/> Zaza</div><div><input type="checkbox"/> Gorani</div><div><input type="checkbox"/> mixed areas</div></div></div></div>	

Ludwig Paul divides Zaza into three main dialects. In addition, there are transitions and edge accents that have a special position and cannot be fully included in any dialect group.^[26]

Literature and broadcast programs

The first written statements in Zaza were compiled by the linguist Peter Lerch in 1850. Two other important documents are the religious writings of Ehmedê Xasî of 1899,^[28] and of Osman Efendiyo Babij^[29] (published in Damascus in 1933 by Celadet Bedir Khan^[30]); both of these works were written in the Arabic script.

The diaspora has also generated a limited amount of Zaza language broadcasting. Moreover, after restrictions were removed on local languages in Turkey in 2003 during their move toward an eventual accession to the European Union, Turkish state-owned TRT Kurdî television launched several Zaza programs^[31] and a radio program on certain days.

Despite being a major Iranian language, Zaza is not well-known to outsiders and has become increasingly vulnerable due to state repression and political unrest in the region. Due to language policies in effect for over 50 years, both the number of Zaza speakers and the degree to which they use the language have been in sharp decline. Diaspora and refugee communities now exist throughout Europe, especially Germany, and in the United States there are currently Zaza communities in New York and New Jersey.^[32]

The institution of Higher Education approved the opening of Zaza Language and Literature Department in Munzur University in 2011 and began accepting students in 2012 for the department. In the following year, Bingöl University established the same department.^[33]

Grammar

As with a number of other Indo-Iranian languages like the Kurdish languages, Zaza features split ergativity in its morphology, demonstrating ergative marking in past and perfective contexts, and nominative-accusative alignment otherwise. Syntactically it is nominative-accusative.^[34]

Grammatical gender

Among all Western Iranian languages only Zaza and Kurmanji distinguish between masculine and feminine grammatical gender. Each noun belongs to one of those two genders. In order to correctly decline any noun and any modifier or other type of word affecting that noun, one must identify whether the noun is feminine or masculine. Most nouns have inherent gender. However, some nominal roots have variable gender, i.e. they may function as either masculine or feminine nouns.^[35] This distinguishes Zaza from many other Western Iranian languages that have lost this feature over time.

For example, the masculine preterite participle of the verb *kerdene* ("to make" or "to do") is *kerde*; the feminine preterite-participle is *kerdiye*. Both have the sense of the English "made" or "done". The grammatical gender of the preterite-participle would be determined by the grammatical gender of the noun representing the thing that was made or done.

The linguistic notion of grammatical gender is distinguished from the biological and social notion of gender, although they interact closely in many languages. Both grammatical and natural gender can have linguistic effects in a given language.

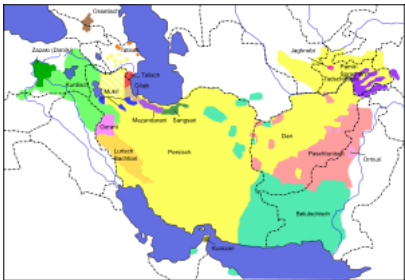
Phonology

Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i	ɨ	u
			ʊ
Mid	e	ə	o
Open		ɑ	

A vowel /e/ may also be realized as /ɛ/ when occurring before a consonant. /ɨ/ may become lowered to an /ɪ/ when occurring before a velarized nasal /n/; [ŋ], or occurring between a palatal approximant /j/ and a palato-alveolar fricative /ʃ/. Vowels /ɑ/, /ɨ/, or /ə/ become nasalized when occurring before /n/, as /ã/, /ĩ/, or /ẽ/.

Consonants



The place of Zaza language in Iranian languages^[27]

		Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental/Alveolar		Palato-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
				plain	phar.						
Stop	voiceless	p		t	tʰ			k	q		
	voiced	b		d				g			
Affricate	voiceless					tʃ					
	voiced					dʒ					
Fricative	voiceless		f	s	sʰ	ʃ		x		ħ	h
	voiced		v	z		ʒ		ʁ		ʕ	
Nasal		m		n				(ŋ)			
Rhotic	tap/flap			r							
	trill			r							
Lateral	central			l							
	velarized			ɭ							
Approximant		w					j				

/n/ becomes a velar /ŋ/ when following a velar consonant.^{[36][37]}

Alphabet

The **Zazaki alphabet** is an extension of the Latin alphabet used for writing the Zaza language, consisting of 32 letters, six of which (ç, ğ, î, û, ş, and ê) have been modified from their Latin originals for the phonetic requirements of the language.^[38]

Zazaki alphabet																																		
Upper case	A	B	C	Ç	D	E	Ê	F	G	Ğ	H	I	Î	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	Ş				T	U	Û	V	W	X	
Lower case	a	b	c	ç	d	e	ê	f	g	ğ	h	i	î	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	ş				t	u	û	v	w	x	
IPA phonemes	<u>a</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>ɖ͡ʒ</u>	<u>t͡ʃ</u>	<u>ɗ</u>	<u>ɛ</u>	<u>ẽ</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>ɡ</u>	<u>ɣ</u>	<u>ħ</u>	<u>ɪ</u>	<u>i̯</u>	<u>ʒ</u>	<u>k</u>	<u>l</u>	<u>m</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>o</u>	<u>p</u>	<u>q</u>	<u>r</u> , <u>ɾ</u>	<u>s</u>	<u>ʃ</u>					<u>t</u>	<u>y</u>	<u>u</u>	<u>v</u>	<u>w</u>	<u>x</u>

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External links

- Zaza People and Zazaki Literature (<http://www.zazaki.net/>)
- News, Articles and Columns (<http://dersiminfo.com/>) (in Zaza)
- News, Folktales, Grammar Course (<http://www.kirmancki.com/>) (in Zaza)
- News, Articles and Bingöl city (<http://www.kirdki.com/>) (in Zaza)
- Center of Zazaki (<http://www.zazaki.de/>) (in Zaza, German, Turkish, and English)
- Zazaki Language Institute (<http://www.zazaki-institut.de/>) (in Zaza, German, and Turkish)
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